

PAUL'S DOXOLOGY

NO. 1266

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the church by
Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
Ephesians 3:20, 21.*

THIS chapter has a whole service of worship within itself. It certainly contains a sermon, for Paul gives a very earnest address upon the unveiling of the hidden mystery so that the Gentiles are made partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel. It contains a prayer, for one of the verses begins, "For this cause I bow my knees." And in the verses before us, it closes with a hymn, a hymn of incomparable praise. Thus, in the compass of a short chapter, we have all those devout exercises with which our assemblies for worship are familiar, namely—instruction, supplication, and praise. It was meet that the apostle should close the chapter as he does, for the doxology here given grows out of the chapter. It is its natural outcome and crowns the whole, even as the flower of the lily is borne up by the stem, completes it and adorns it. The chapter would have been altogether incomplete without the ascription of praise—not perhaps in its sense, but certainly in its spiritual development. Mount Zion doubtless possessed in itself both glory and beauty, but the temple on its summit constituted its most sacred charm. Even so, to a noble chapter this doxology is a divine climax, adding glory and sanctity to all the rest.

If you look the chapter through, you will see that the apostle has represented the gospel in its various aspects to different persons and generally has set it forth with the word *unto*. In the fifth verse, he speaks of it as manifested *unto the sons of men*. It was not revealed to them in the olden time so clearly as now, but now unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, the gospel is revealed and we live in its clear light, for which we have reason for great thankfulness. It would be a good subject to dwell upon—the relation of the gospel unto the sons of men. The apostle, a little lower down in the eighth verse, speaks of the relation of the gospel *unto himself*, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given." What the gospel may do unto other men is of great importance for us to allow, but the knowledge will little avail us unless we can testify of what it has done unto each one of us personally. All the gold mines of California are of less worth to a man than the money in his own possession. Can you, beloved hearers, speak, each one for himself and say of the gospel—"unto me is this grace given"? Further on, the apostle speaks of the angels, and in the 10th verse he says, "To the intent that now *unto the principalities and powers* in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." The gospel has a relation to angels—they have always had something to do with it, for of old they desired to look into it. And it is written of our Lord that He was "seen of angels." We know also that they rejoice over penitent sinners, and that they join in those ascriptions of glory which the redeemed in heaven present to the Lamb of God. Yet further, the apostle, without exactly using the word "unto," dwells upon the relation of the gospel *to the people whom he addressed* when he declares that he had prayed to the Lord that He would grant them, according to the richness of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. Thus having mentioned how the gospel bears upon mankind at large, upon inspired men, upon himself, upon angels and then upon the saints to whom he was writing, he turns with a full heart to look at its bearings upon God Himself. And now it is no longer "unto principalities and powers." It is no longer even "unto me," or "unto the holy apostles and prophets." But his theme is "*unto HIM*." I pray God the Holy Spirit to fulfill my desire at this time that every one of us who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, may look wholly *unto the Lord* and spend the little time appointed for our discourse in reverent adoration of Him from whom all grace comes and to whom all the glory ought therefore to return, "for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." If unto

Him there should be glory in the church throughout all ages, then to Him should there be glory in this church at this present moment. O Lord, help us to render it unto You.

In our text, we have adoration, not prayer; the apostle had done with that. Adoration—not even so much the act of praise as the full sense that praise is due and far more of it than we can render. I hardly know how to describe adoration. Praise is a river flowing on joyously in its own channel, banked up on either side that it may run towards its one object. But adoration is the same river overflowing all banks, flooding the soul, and covering the entire nature with its great waters—and these not so much moving and stirring as standing still in profound repose, mirroring the glory which shines down upon it—like a summer's sun upon a sea of glass. Adoration is not seeking the divine presence, but conscious of it to an unutterable degree and therefore full of awe and peace, like the Sea of Galilee when its waves felt the touch of the sacred feet. Adoration is the fullness, the height and depth, the length and breadth of praise. Adoration seems to me to be as the starry heavens which are always proclaiming the glory of God and yet, “there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.” It is the eloquent silence of a soul that is too full for language. Adoration is to prostrate yourself in the dust in humility and yet to soar aloft in sublime thought—to sink into nothing and yet to be so enlarged as to be filled with all the fullness of God. It is to have no thought and yet to be all thought—to lose yourself in God—this is adoration. This should be the frequent state of the renewed mind. We ought to set apart far longer time for this sacred engagement, or what shall we call it? act or state? It were for our highest enrichment if we made it our daily prayer that the blessed Spirit would frequently bear us right out of ourselves and lift us above all these trifles which surround us till we were only conscious of God and His exceeding glory. Oh that He would plunge us into the Godhead's deepest sea till we were lost in His immensity and could only exclaim in wonder, “Oh, the depths! Oh, the depths!” In that spirit I desire to approach the text and I ask you to turn your eyes away from all else to HIM, even to the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. I do not ask you to remember what the gospel does for you except as you remember it to render praise for it. I do not ask you to contemplate the gospel in its reference to men and angels, but only to consider the Lord Himself and to render Him glory for ability to bless, enrich, and sanctify above all our asking or thinking. Looking to the Lord alone, let us draw near unto Him in spirit and in truth.

I. Our first consideration shall be, UPON WHAT PART OF HIS GLORIOUS CHARACTER SHALL OUR MINDS REST? The text guides us to *the divine ability*. “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly.” And it selects the divine ability to bless—“to do according to the power that works in us.” This, then, is the subject.

What does the apostle say of it? He declares that the divine ability to bless is *above what we ask*. We have asked great things in our time. We remember when it seemed the greatest conceivable thing for us to say, “Father, forgive me.” We asked a large thing when we requested the pardon of all our sins and an equally great thing when we prayed to be cleansed in spirit. When we felt our hearts hard and our natures depraved, it seemed almost too great a blessing to expect the heart of stone to be turned to a heart of flesh. We did, however, cry for gracious renewal and the prayer was heard. Full many a time since then, in deep distress, we have besought the Lord for great deliverances. In abject need, we have sought great supplies and in terrible dilemmas, we have asked for great guidance—and we have received all these again and again. The blessings sought and obtained have assuredly been neither few nor small.

Some of us would almost seem to have tried the limit of prayer in the matters for which we have cried unto the Lord. We have, in times of holy boldness and sacred access, asked large things, such as one could only ask of the Great King. And yet our asking has been too short a line to reach the bottom of divine ability—He is able to do above what we ask. Our prayer at its best and boldest has many a boundary. It is limited often by our sense of need. We scarcely know what we need. We need to be taught what we should pray for or we never ask aright. We mistake our condition. We know not how deep and numerous our needs are. Our soul's hunger is not keen enough—sin has taken the edge from our spiritual appetites and therefore we limit and cramp our prayers. But blessed be God, He is not limited by our sense of need. His guests do but ask for bread and water, but behold, His oxen and fatlings are killed and a feast is made of fat things—“of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”

Yes, and our need itself is limited. We do not need everything. Empty as we are, there are some things that can fill us even to the brim. But God is able to go beyond our absolute needs and He has often already done so. He has given to His redeemed more than, as creatures, they absolutely require making them happy and blessed. We might have been restored to the full stature of unfallen manhood and in consequence have been as Adam was before his sin, but wonder of wonders, the Lord has done more, for He has made us His children and His heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs of Jesus Christ. This is not the supply of necessity—it is the bestowal of honor, dignity, and exceedingly great glory. And now, although our needs are in themselves very terrible and far greater than can be supplied by anything short of all-sufficiency, yet God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we actually need. He will not treat us as men treat a pensioner, to whom they allot barely enough to live upon and count themselves generous for doing so. He will treat us as kings and princes and do exceeding abundantly above all that we need. Thus does He leave our prayers far behind, outstripping both our sense of need and the need itself.

Our prayer is also limited by our desire. Of course a man does not pray any further than his desires go—and our desires are not always as much awake as they should be. We are sometimes very cold and slow in desiring good things. The nether springs make us forget the upper fountains. Alas, like the foolish king of Israel, we shoot but two or three arrows when we ought to have emptied out our quiver. We bring but small cups to the well and take home but little water. Our mouths are not opened wide enough, for our hearts are not warm enough to melt the ice which closes our lips. But blessed be God, He is not limited by our desires. He is able to bless us beyond what our souls have yet learned to wish for.

And, alas, when we do desire great things, our faith is often weak and there we are restrained. We cannot believe God to be so good as to give us such unspeakable blessings and so we fail. How much we lose thereby I scarcely dare pause to consider. Our unbelief is a great impoverishment to us. Even when faith does become developed, and sometimes it does, yet I guarantee you its stature never reaches the height of the promise. No man ever believed God as much as he might believe, nor trusted His promise so implicitly as he might do, or put so large a construction upon the divine Word as it would bear. O brethren, we have to thank God that He is not bounded by our narrow faith, but even goes beyond what we believe concerning Him.

How often too we are limited in prayer by our lack of comprehension—we do not understand what God means. Search to see if there is a single promise in the whole covenant of grace which any child of God perfectly understands. There is a meaning in the covenant promises—a breadth, a length, a height, a depth not yet compassed. God condescends to use human language and to us the words mean silver, but He uses them in a golden sense. He never means less than He says, but He always means far more than we think He says. For this let us magnify the Lord. His power to bless us is not bounded by our power to understand the blessing. Grace is not measured to us according to our capacity to receive, but according to His efficacy to bestow. He can enlarge us, my brethren. O that He would do so now! Prayer is an exercise in which our minds ought to be expanded and our hearts enlarged. Has not the Lord said, “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it”? Yet our widest mouth is not the measure of what He can give us. Our boldest prayer is not the boundary of what He is able to bestow. Pray at your utmost, like Elijah upon Carmel. Pray as you will till the keys of heaven seem to swing at your side and yet you can never outrun that omnipotence to bless which dwells in the Lord God Almighty.

The apostle then goes on to say that *the ability of God to bless is above what we think*. Now we can think of some things we dare not pray for. Thought is free and scarcely can space contain it. Its wings bear it far beyond all visible things. It can even soar into the impossible, yet thought cannot attain to the power of God to bless, for that is immeasurable. Have you not at times been filled with great thoughts of what God might do with you? Have you not imagined how He might use you for His glory? He can do more than you have dreamed! Turn your pleasant dreams into fervent prayers and it may yet please the Lord to make you useful to an amazing degree—so that you shall be astonished at what you will accomplish. If of a humble shepherd lad He made a David, He may do the same with you. Have you not, at other times, conceived great ideas of what the Lord will make out of you when you shall be washed, cleansed, delivered from sin, and carried away to serve Him in heaven? Ah, but you have no idea what you will be. You do not know, when you have guessed your greatest, how perfect and pure and blessed

you will be in your Father's house on high when He has completed in you all the good pleasure of His will. You have sung sometimes—

“What must it be to dwell above!”

And your thoughts and imaginations have gone to very great lengths in picturing the repose, the security, the wealth, the enjoyment, the perfect satisfaction of heaven. Ah, yes, but the Lord is able to do more than has ever entered into your heart. There, fling the bridle on the neck of your imagination and let it, like a winged horse, not only scour the plains of earth, but fly through the clouds and mount above the stars—but its furthestmost flight on the most rapid wings shall not bring you near the confines of the possibilities of God. Your thoughts, even at their best, are not His thoughts. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His thoughts above yours, think however you may. How amazing a subject is now before us! What language of mine can adequately set forth the divine ability to bless, when both the eagle eye of prayer and the eagle wing of thought fail to discover a boundary?

Now, I want to call your attention, in this passage, to every word of it, for every word is emphatic. “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above *all* that we ask or think.” Not above some things that we ask, but, “all.” Not above some of our dimmer conceptions, our lower thoughts, but above “all” that we think. Now just put together all that you have ever asked for. Heap it up and then pile upon the top all that you have ever thought of concerning the riches of divine grace. What a mountain! Here we have hill on hill, Pelion on Ossa, as though Alp on Alp were heaped on end to build a staircase or a Jacob's ladder to the very stars. Go on! Go on! It is no Babel tower you build and yet its top will not reach unto heaven. High as this pyramid of prayers and contemplations may be piled, God's ability to bless is still higher—“above *all* that we ask or even think.” Some render it, “Now unto Him that is able to do above all things exceeding abundantly,” and so on. Well, take it so. God is able to bless us above all things; above all the blessings that others could give us—that is little; above all the blessedness which resides in creatures—that is great, but not comparable to what He can do; above all the blessings which can be imagined to be conveyed to us by all the creatures that are useful and beneficial to us—He is able to do above all good things for us. O Lord, help us to understand all this. Give us faith to get a grip of this and then to magnify and adore You. Alas, our adoration can never be proportionate to Your goodness!

Now, dwell on another word, “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that *we* ask or think.” The *we* refers to the apostles as well as to ourselves. Paul was a mighty man in prayer. What a wonderful prayer this chapter contains—how he finishes up, “That you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” I will defy any man to bring out the meaning of those words to the fullest. Yet when he had prayed that prayer, Paul felt that God could go far beyond his comprehension of it. I do not know how, but he says so—above all that *we* ask—and of course this includes himself. Paul, in that *we* may be viewed as including the apostles—we, the twelve who have come nearest to Jesus and have been personally taught how to pray by Him—we who have seen Him face to face and upon whom His Spirit specially rests. “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above what *we* ask!” The apostles were inspired. The Spirit of God was in them to an unusual degree, their thoughts were larger than ours, but says Paul, He is able to do above what *we* think, even *we*, His apostles, the best, the most holy, the most spiritual of Christian men! Oh, then, brethren, I am sure He is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think, for it is a terrible come down from the apostles' asking and thinking to ours. He must be able to do exceeding abundantly above the asking or thoughts of such poor, puny saints as we are.

Now, notice the apostle's use of the word, “*abundantly*.” He says not only that God is able to do above what we ask or think, but “*abundantly*.” We might say of a man, “He has given much, but he has still something left.” That expression would fall sadly short if applied to the Most High. He has not only something left, but all abundance left. We have already understood but a part of His ways. We have been able to comprehend the mere remnant of His glorious grace. The reserve of goodness; the things which God has prepared for them that love Him, far exceed our thoughts. Our apostle, not content with the use of the word “*abundantly*,” adds another word, and says, “*exceeding abundantly*.” He has constructed here in the Greek an expression which is altogether his own. No language was powerful enough for the apostle—I mean for the Holy Spirit speaking through the apostle—for very often Paul has to coin words and phrases to show forth his meaning and here is one—“He is able to do exceeding abundantly”—so abundantly that it exceeds measure and description. Yonder ship is on the sea and the sea can

bear it up, though it weighs several thousand tons. Does that surprise you, my brethren? No, for you know that the ocean could float not merely one such ship, but a navy, yes, and more navies than you could count if you continued to number them throughout the lifelong day. The far-reaching main is able to bear upon its bosom, ships innumerable. It supports them “exceeding abundantly.” God is as the great ocean. What you have seen Him do is but as it were the floating of one single boat. But what He can do, ah, that is “exceeding abundantly” above what you ask or think. There flows our beautiful river among the meadows and the child dips its cup to drink and is fully refreshed. Yet all that the child can take is as nothing compared with what still remains—and if along the banks of Father Thames, crowds of thirsty ones should congregate and drink their fill, both men and cattle—yet all they could abstract from the waters would bear a very inconsiderable proportion to the volume which would still flow to the sea. Lo, I see thousands of the redeemed crowding down to the all-sufficiency of God. I see them lie down to drink like men that must take draughts both long and deep or die. But after they have all drunk and all the creatures that live have all been supplied, I see no lessening in the blessedness which pours forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb, which can only be described in these words, “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think.”

Now to help you to adore the Lord—for that is my one objective this morning—think how blessed you are in having such an all-sufficient God. It is always pleasant to take out of a great heap and to know that what you receive does not deprive others of their share. Who cares to sit at a table where every morsel must be counted, for if you have more, somebody must have less? It is a scant feast where the provision is exactly measured. Here, at the table of our God, there is need of no such economy. “Eat, O friends, drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved,” for the feast is of the King and His provisions are infinite.

Thus we see that there need be no limit to our prayers. You need never rise from your knees and say, “Perhaps I was presumptuous. Perhaps I have asked more than God will give?” Down on your knees, brother, sister, and ask God to forgive you for dishonoring Him by harboring such a thought. He is able to give exceeding abundantly above what you ask.

Thus we see also that He is still able to bless *us*, upon whom the ends of the earth are come, for if He was able to do exceeding abundantly in the apostle’s time, He is quite as able still, and we may come to Him without fear. Now, I see also that if my case is very special, still I need not tremble or stand in dread of need. What if I require superabundant grace? I may have it. If I need exceeding abundant help, I can have it. Ah, if I need more grace than I dare ask for, I can have it. Yes, and if I require more than I think, I may have it, for still my Lord is able to give it to me, and what He is able to do, He is willing to do.

What comfort this should afford even to poor sinners who are far away from God. He is able to give you great forgiveness for the greatest possible sin. Sins that you have not yet thought of, He can pardon. Do but come to God in Christ Jesus and you shall find Him able to save to the uttermost. If this little hint is taken up by some despairing heart, it may give it immediate peace. It cannot be true that God cannot forgive, for in Christ Jesus, “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or even think.”

II. Our second business is to answer the inquiry, **IN WHAT WAY DO WE PERCEIVE THIS ABILITY?** We cannot well praise what we cannot in any measure discern. The apostle says, “*according to the power that works in us.*” We know that God can give us more than we ask or think, for *He has given us more than we have asked or thought.* Our regeneration came to us before prayer, for prayer was the first sign of the new birth already given. To pray for life is not a faculty of the dead—but regeneration puts into us the living desire and the spiritual longing. The first principle of life imparted makes us long after more life. We were dead in sin and far from God and He surprised us with His preventing mercy. And in us was fulfilled the words, “I was found of them that sought Me not.” In this case, He did for us above what we asked or thought.

Redemption again—whoever sought for that? Had it not been provided from of old, who would have dared to ask the Lord to give His Son as a substitute to bleed and die for man? Sirs, in providing a substitute for us from before the foundation of the world, the Lord has already gone beyond man’s thoughts or requests. Thanks be unto Him for His unspeakable gift. He gave us Christ and then gave us His blessed Spirit, another surprising boon which man could not have supposed possible for him to have ob-

tained. Having done that which we never sought for, nor thought of, He is still able to amaze us with unlooked for grace.

Moreover, *where prayer has been offered, our heavenly Father has gone far beyond what we have asked or thought*. I said unto the Lord, in the anguish of my soul, that if He would forgive my sins I would be content to be the meanest servant in His house and would gladly lie in prison all my life, and live on bread and water. But His mercy did not come to me in that scanty way, for He put me among His children and gave me an inheritance. "Make me as one of Your hired servants" is a prayer the Father does not hear—He puts His hand on His child's mouth when he begins to talk so, and says, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet." We have asked for a stone and He has given us bread. We have asked for bare bread and he has given us angels' food. For brass, He has given silver and for silver, gold. We looked for a drop and the rain has filled the pools. We sought a morsel and He has filled us with good things. And therefore we are warranted in expecting that in the future He will continue to outdo our prayers.

Look at the plan of salvation, in the next place, and you will see how *it suggests the ability of God to do more for us*. Who is He that chose us? Who is He that has begotten us again unto a lively hope? It is God the Father. And when you mention Him as having put His hand to the work of grace, you have opened a wide door of hope, for what is there He cannot do? He who has filled yon heavens with stars, scattering them broadcast as the sower sows corn, and could have made a thousand universes all full of worlds with as much ease as man speaks a word—has He begun to bless us and can there be any limit to His power to deal graciously with us? Impossible!

Look next at His dear Son. He that created the heavens and the earth is made a Man and lies in a manger. He whom angels obey is despised and rejected of men. He, who only has immortality, hangs on a tree and bleeds and dies. There must be, in those groans and those drops of sweat, and those wounds, and that death of His, a power to save altogether inconceivable. Immanuel made a sacrifice! What ability to bless must dwell in Him! He must be able to do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think.

And who is this, the divine Spirit, who comes to dwell in us? Yes, literally to dwell in these mortal bodies and make these tabernacles of clay His temples! He has already mortified our lusts, already changed our hearts, and already made us partakers of the divine nature. My brethren, is there any limit to the possibilities of the Spirit's work in us? May we not fairly conclude that when God Himself comes to inhabit our bodies, He will deliver us from every sin and make us spotless as God is spotless—till in us shall be fulfilled the command—"Be you holy, for I am holy"?

Look at the plan—it is drawn to a wondrous scale. The Trinity in Unity is manifest in the divine working within us and there must be something inconceivably great possible to us through the working of such mighty power. Come then, dear friend, and for a moment think of the power which actually dwells in you; if you are a Christian, you must be conscious of a power in you far too great for your mental or physical constitution to bear if it were not restrained. Do you never experience groans which cannot be uttered, deep and terrible, like the moving of an earthquake, as though everything were loosed within you with extreme heaviness, anguish, and travailing in birth? These pangs and throes betray the latent God within you, cramped for room within the narrow bounds of your new created and growing spiritual nature. Have you never felt the working and striving of strong desires, fierce hunger, and insatiable thirsts? Have you not felt mysterious energies working like pent-up springs within your spirit, demanding space and vent, or threatening to burst your heart? Are you never conscious of the infinite struggling within you? Have you never felt like a little bird shut up within its egg, chipping at the shell to gain liberty? Are you not conscious that you are not what you shall be? Do you not feel omnipotence rush through you sometimes with unutterable joy, till you have to cry, "Hold, my Lord, this joy becomes not man—it is the joy of Christ fulfilled in me and if I feel it any longer I must die, for in this body it is insupportable"? There are ecstasies, but we must not tell of them here. There are high mysterious delights of which it is scarcely lawful to speak, upliftings wherein man so communes with his Maker as to rise above himself and to be far more than man—even as the bush in Horeb, though but a bush, was rendered capable of burning with fire without being consumed—and so was more than a bush, for it blazed with Deity. Are not your hearts familiar with these sacred mysteries of the heaven-born life? If they are, then you have the means of guessing at the apostle's meaning when he said, "He is able to do exceeding

abundantly above all that we ask or even think, according to the power that works in us." God grant us to know this more fully.

III. Our third consideration is—WHAT, THEN, SHALL BE RENDERED TO GOD? "*Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.*" "Unto Him be glory." Oh, my soul, adore Him! Feel His splendor, let His exceeding goodness shine full upon your soul and warm you with its rays and let the warmth be adoring love! Oh, my soul, tell out His goodness and reflect the light which falls upon you from Himself—and so glorify Him by manifesting to the sons of men what He manifests to you! Yes, my soul, let all that is within you bathe in His boundless goodness and then glorify Him by perpetual service. Bow your strength to obedience. Be yoked to that mighty chariot in which Jesus rides forth conquering and to conquer, saving the sons of Adam. God deserves glory in the most emphatic sense and in the most practical meaning of that term. Oh, my brethren and sisters, let us try to render it to Him.

But the apostle felt that he must not say, "Unto Him be glory in my soul." He wished that, but his one soul afforded far too little space and so he cried, "Unto Him be glory *in the church.*" He calls upon all the people of God to praise the divine name. If all the world beside were dumb, the church must always proclaim the glory of God. If moon and stars and sun and sea no more reflect the majesty of the Creator, yet let the redeemed of the Lord praise Him, even those whom He has redeemed out of the hand of the enemy. As Israel sung at the Red Sea with dances and timbrel, so let the church of God exult, for He has brought us through the sea and drowned our adversaries—"The depths have covered them, there is not one of them left." You, O Jesus, have redeemed our souls with blood, have set the prisoners free, and made us to be a royal priesthood and therefore Your church must praise You without ceasing.

But as if he felt that the church herself was unequal to the task, though she is ordained to be the sphere of the divine glory, note how he puts it, "*in the church by Christ Jesus.*" You, Lord Jesus, You are He alone among men eloquent enough to express the glory of God. Grace is poured into Your lips and You can declare our praises for us. Brethren, do you not remember how our blessed Lord vowed to praise the divine name among His brethren? Read the twenty-second Psalm, and you will see how He becomes the chief musician, the leader of the choirs of the blessed. By Christ it is that our praises ascend to heaven. He is the spokesman for us, the interpreter, one of a thousand before the throne of the infinite Majesty. O Christ—we are Your body, and every member of the body praises God. But You are the Head and You must speak for us with those dear lips that are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh. You must offer our praises to the great High Priest and they shall be accepted at Your hands.

Yet the apostle was not satisfied, for he adds, "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus *through all ages.*" And the Greek runs exactly thus, "unto all the generations of the age of ages." Perhaps the apostle half expected the world to last for ages, although he did not know when Christ might come and therefore stood watching for Him. At any rate, he desired that generation after generation might show forth the glory of God and when there were no more succeeding races of men, he desired that that age of ages, the golden age, God's age, the age of peace and joy and blessedness, whatever phases it might pass through, might never cease to resound with the glory of God. Oh, blessed words of the apostle! We cannot reach their meaning and if we did, still that meaning would be short of what God deserves—

*"I'll praise Him while He lends me breath;
And when my voice is lost in death!
Praise shall employ my nobler powers
My days of praise shall be never past,
While thought and life and being last,
Or immortality endures."*

Our children shall follow after us and they shall praise the Lord. And their children and they shall praise Him and their children and they shall praise Him. And when the time comes that the earth grows old and Christ Himself shall descend from heaven to renew all things, His saints shall magnify Him when He comes. When He smites His foes and breaks them in pieces like potter's vessels, the saints shall still adore Him. And when comes the end and He shall have delivered up the power to God, even the Father, still the everlasting song shall go up to God and the Lamb. And through the ages of ages when God shall

be all in all, it shall be the bliss of every redeemed one forever and forever to say, "Unto Him be glory, unto Him be glory forever and ever."

IV. I have done when you have done—and the last point concerns what you have to do. **WHAT SHALL WE SAY TO ALL THIS?**

The text tells us in one word. It concludes with your part of it—"Amen." Some of you have newly been born to God. You are babes in His family. I pray you to glorify Him this morning, who can do for you exceeding abundantly above what you ask or think. Say, "Amen," while we unite in ascribing glory to Him. And you, my brethren, who, like myself are in the vigor of manhood, in the very prime of life, working for God, let us heartily say, "Amen," as well we may, for all the grace we have had and still have comes from Him. And you, my venerable brethren who are getting near to heaven, there is more mellowness in your voices than in ours, for there is a ripeness and maturity in your experience, therefore say you first and foremost, "Unto Him be glory in the church." Say it now, all classes of believers—you who are rejoicing in the Lord this morning, and you also who are sorrowful and sad, say, "Amen;" though you have not the present joy, yet say, "Amen," in the expectation of it. Be not laggard any one of you to say, "Unto Him be glory in the church throughout all ages. Amen." Say it, O church below, without exception. Say it, all you militant ones. You saints that lie upon your sick beds and you that are near to death, yet say, "Amen"; you that suffer and you that labor, you who sow and you who reap, say, "Amen"; and when the whole church below has said, "Amen," O church above, take up the grand, "Amen!" You triumphant ones who have washed your robes in the blood of the Lamb, I need not challenge you to say, "Amen," for I know you do it louder and more sweetly than saints below.

You sinners, who have not yet tasted of His grace, I think I might almost urge you to say, "Amen," for if you have not yet obtained mercy, He is able to give it to you. You have come here, this morning, thirsty like Hagar and God sees you. You are searching for a little water to fill your bottle. See, yonder is a well, a well which flows freely. Drink of it, drink and live, and say, "Amen," as you bless the Lord who looks on you in love. Perhaps you came here like Saul, seeking your father's donkeys, or some such trifles. Behold, He gives you a kingdom—He gives you more than you ask or think—freely He gives it according to the riches of His grace. Accept it, and then say, "Amen." Oh, with one heart and one soul let all of you that have been redeemed from death and hell, or even hope to be so, join in this ascription—

*"Now to the Lord, whose power can do
More than our thoughts or wishes know,
Be everlasting honor done,
By all the church, through Christ His Son."*

Amen and amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Ephesians 3.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—166, 450, 412.**

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